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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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DATE: March 6, 1959

SUBJECT: Germany, Berlin and Related Questions

PARTICIPANTS:

Mr. Hillenbrand, GER
Mr. Saul F. Rae, Minister, Canadian Embassy
Mr. J. H. McFarland, Jr. GFA

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Mr. Rae asked to be brought up to date on developments affecting Germany and Berlin since the receipt of the latest Soviet note of March 2.

Mr. Hillenbrand replied that we were already thinking about a reply. One principal problem is making up our minds on the subject of a Summit Meeting. If we didn't want to move precipitately into a Summit meeting we had to think about how to formulate our concept of a Foreign Ministers Meeting to make it appealing. This was essentially a linguistic problem which we have not yet solved. The Four Power Working Group may have our draft by next week. The French and British are also expected to produce drafts.

The British feel we should move more hesitantly and wait until Macmillan has completed his visits to the three Western capitals before replying to the Soviet note. We don't agree.

Mr. Rae said he thought the western formulation and proposed composition of a Foreign Ministers meeting offered a reasonable basis for agreement. It appeared that the Soviets have left the door open for this.

Mr. Hillenbrand replied that we don't visualize the Foreign Ministers preparing for a Summit meeting. It's hard to visualize exactly what the Russians have in mind. The British report to NATO on Macmillan's Moscow trip, however, was very revealing on this one point. They definitely do assume

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do assume that a Foreign Ministers meeting would lead directly into a Summit Meeting. We don't think we can abandon our traditional position on a Summit Meeting because of the Soviet threat to Berlin. This would be regarded as a sign of weakness on our part.

He agreed that the replies made by Canada and other countries invited to a German Peace Conference had been non-provocative and had been well designed to discourage reply.

Mr. Rae then asked about the Agenda. He understood the Russians would seek to limit this to discussion of a Peace Treaty and Berlin.

Mr. Hillenbrand replied that we would seek to broaden the basis of the agenda. To do otherwise would be a sign of weakness. It should be possible, however, by utilizing linguistic dexterity to fuzze over this problem as we did with others in our last note. The Soviets must realize it will be difficult to prevent us from talking about what we want to talk about. However, our Ambassador in Moscow thinks that if we raised points with Gromyko in a Foreign Ministers meeting about which he didn't want to talk that he would simply walk out.

It is now the British view that the Soviets want a blessing of the status quo in eastern Europe and that they are only secondarily concerned about nuclear armament of the Federal Republic. If they truly fear German militarism it is due only to residual memories of German military prowess. They apparently fear that if Germany is permitted to develop sufficient offensive capacity that it could drag the rest of NATO into a conflict with the USSR.

It seemed clear as can be in the present confused situation that the Soviets at some point in the last 18 months, because of GDI persuasion or for other reasons agreed that the GDI was incapable of playing the role assigned to it in the development of the Soviet bloc with the drain and influence of Berlin. The GDI had to be buttressed. They seem to have arrived at the decision last summer to eliminate western influence in Berlin and sign a peace treaty with the GDI. We do not regard this planned agreement as a legal treaty.

Mr. Rae referred again to the most recent Soviet note and asked if the question of participation in the Foreign Ministers or Summit meetings as proposed by the Soviets created any special problems for us.

Mr. Hillenbrand replied that the Secretary has very strong views on this point. He regards all proposals for parity as a Pandora's box. We would never again have a chance to meet with the Soviets on any subject without their insisting on parity if we once acquiesced in this proposal. To do so on Berlin would undermine our legal position that we have a special interest and right to be in Berlin and Germany and to talk with the Russians on these subjects. Other countries, including Czechoslovakia and Poland have rights and interests too. At an appropriate time we propose to bring in all of them.

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Mr. Rae

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Mr. Rae asked if Mr. Hillenbrand knew anything about the views of others. Mr. Hillenbrand said that so far discussion had only been at the Working level. It seemed to be the view of the British and French that we could not refuse to have a conference purely over the issue of a Soviet demand for parity.

The President had been right in noting a Soviet relaxation over details but there had been no changes on principles.

There is general agreement that we need a conference. One view is that a conference would provide a means of talking to death the Berlin issue and thus give the Soviets a chance "to get themselves off the hook on Berlin". It seemed to him, however, that there would eventually have to be a confrontation on the issue. We should test the above theory, however.

It is hard to tell at present what the position of the other satellites and East Germany would be in a Conference. We believe they will make an effort to get them in on a basis of equality. We would have to resist this. We may lay great stress on this issue but doubt the conference would be allowed to break up solely on this point.

In reply to a question about NATO, Mr. Hillenbrand said that one of the reasons for the Working Group going to Paris was to speed the problem of coordinating with the NAC. It was difficult to coordinate with the British, French and Germans and the rest of NATO in arriving at a position. Everyone in NATO had his own ideas about how to handle the present issue. It will be very difficult to have anything definite to say at the March 11 NAC meeting. With the best will in the world to keep the NAC informed it is practically impossible. The Working Group will not be making policy. It will be making an ad referendum report. The report will raise a number of unresolved issues which the Foreign Ministers will have to settle.

Mr. Rae asked if the NAC would be given a look at the report. He also asked about the questionnaire prepared at the last Working Group session and asked if we had written out answers to the questions.

Mr. Hillenbrand replied that the NAC would be given a look at the Working Group report to be prepared during the Paris session. As for the questionnaire, we had roughed out answers. We were most interested at this stage in analyzing Soviet intentions and of drafting western objectives and working out our tactics. We have to have some consensus as to the principle and secondary Soviet objectives. The impressions Macmillan had brought back from Moscow seem to correspond very closely with our own analysis.

1. Khrushchev is

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1. Khrushchev is not interested in the reunification of Germany.
2. He is not prepared to pay a price for disengagement which would cause the Soviets to lose East Germany. But their constant talking about disengagement gives rise to wishful thinking in the West. The British communique, however, gave no encouragement to the view that disengagement could be discussed independently of reunification.

Mr. Rae asked about Berlin itself.

Mr. Hillenbrand replied that we felt that the Berlin question should be settled as part of an over-all German settlement. At the same time if this proved impossible, we would have to give thought to modalities to maintain our position. These would have to be explored carefully. We have not come up with any solution acceptable both to ourselves and the Russians. We will have to have Berlin proposals as part of our larger proposals. The Working Group will have to break up into sub-groups in order to work out proposals within two weeks, let NAC have a look at results and let the Four Foreign Ministers discuss them on March 30 and 31 before the NATO Foreign Ministers Meeting in Washington in the first week of April.

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